

SAINT LOUIS BIRD CLUB BULLETIN

Official Organ of the Saint Louis Bird Club
for the Protection of
Bird Enjoyment, Bird Study and Bird Conservation

Vol. 3

April 11, 1934

Number 4

THE APRIL MEETING

will be held Wednesday, April 18th at 8 P. M., at the Cabany Branch Library. Program for this meeting will be discussion of field marks of birds of the month, illustrated by colored pictures on the screen. The Club President and two Directors will present the chief marks of identification of the birds now to be found in our latitude; but while these will take the lead, they also invite any who desire particular species cleared up in their minds, as to how to recognize them, to ask that this bird be thrown also on the screen and discussed. The object of this program therefore is to make our field trips more enjoyable to us, for many birds do not give us time in the field for us to debate their identity.

DUES NOW PAYABLE

Those in arrears with their annual dues should remit same to the secretary immediately. In accordance with the By-Laws of our constitution we cannot send the club's bulletin to any member three months in arrears with their dues because of the expense. This, therefore is the last call. Please make arrangements with Miss E. Golterman, c/o Educational Museum, 3325 Bell Ave., Phone Jeff. 1587.

FIELD OBSERVATIONS

(Address communications relative to this department to Tom Kirksey, 33 Arundel Place, St. Louis, Mo.)

The outstanding event of March was the discovery of a flock of Ruddy Sheldrakes, an Old World Waterfowl, at Horse-
(continued page 71)

NEW SPECIES FOUND

A recent observation by a member of the St. Louis Bird Club which will establish another record for the Ruddy Sheldrake (*Casarea Ferruginea*) should be reported at this time, and probably noted again after more follow-up has been possible.

Early on March 12 Miss Ernst saw on Horseshoe Lake three, to her unknown, ducks at a hundred-yard range. Eight-power binoculars and a telescope were used, and later the distance was reduced to about 60 yards. The observation lasted over 15 minutes. The three birds were feeding quietly and unalarmed in shallow water alongside a dyke. Soon they slipped into the dead willows back of the open water in which they were first seen.

The American manuals and authorities lent no assistance in identification at that time. Inquiry was later started in the neighborhood to discover whether any ducks of this character were being bred or whether any hybrids could be found amongst the decoys of the region. Later checking of events results in the following record:

Groups of three ducks (may be these same three) were seen by a fisherman and a farmer during the week of March 12. In the evening of March 18 a flock estimated by two people as being more than 50 and less than 75, coming from the northeast, broke over the Horseshoe Lake water into groups of three or two. One pair left the lake and went to a feeding pen a quarter of a mile away; a goodly number of the flock continued on in their flight. During the week of the 18th, numerous people-fishermen, hunters and farmers---noted and remarked on the brown breasted ducks that they were
(continued page 73)

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The bird walks conducted in Forest Park began March 31st with a crowd of about forty. The second trip, April 7 was more than double this number. Both mornings were very cloudy and chilly, thus accounting for crowds not being larger. The walks to be conducted on each Saturday and Sunday throughout the month in Forest Park will likely increase beyond all expectation; especially on April 29th when walks will also be sponsored in two other parks by the Club. To those of us who are anxious to spread love for bird life the success of these walks is very gratifying. The three newspapers are cooperating very nicely with us, all giving us much space, summarizing each walk. Look these over!

The list of species observed on these walks will appear in the next issue of this bulletin. The list as begun March 31st is as follows: Canada Goose; Black Duck; Wood Duck; Ring-necked Duck; Lesser Scaup; Bobwhite; Killdeer; Belted Kingfisher; Flicker; Sapsucker; Hairy and Downy Woodpeckers; Northern Horned Lark; Purple Martin; Jay; Crow; Chickadee; Titmouse; White-breasted Nuthatch; Brown Creeper; Carolina Wren; Robin; Bluebird; Golden-crowned Kinglet; Starling; Red-winged

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

A number of telephone calls and a few letters have come to my office and home these past few weeks, all containing some inquiry about the Bird Club, the nature of our work and the requirements for membership.

These calls and letters seem to me to indicate that there are many people in this City who have had or are developing an interest in birds and have had no knowledge that such an organization as ours existed.

One of the purposes of this Club is to band such people together and to get all of us working toward the end of bird protection, conservation and education.

All of us have been somewhat lax in spreading the news of the Bird Club and it is now time for us to get on the job and talk it up.

We do not want faddists in our membership, but we do want all the people in this vicinity who are interested in birds to join us and work with us.

Now, you members, of the Bird Club, become a little more Club conscious and go after new, interested members.

CARDINAL EXTENDING RANGE

Several recent records seem to indicate that the Cardinal is extending its range northward. Prof. Eifrig, near Chicago has found this so in that vicinity; DuMont's revised list of the Birds of Iowa speaks of the same extension; and N. R. Barger, while at Madison, Wisconsin, found at least six individuals at various points within that city.

Blackbird; Bronzed Grackle; Cowbird; Cardinal; Purple Finch; Red-eyed Towhee; Vesper Sparrow; Junco; Chipping Sparrow; Fox Sparrow; Song Sparrow.

Watch this list grow with each successive walk throughout the month. At the close of the season members will know pretty definitely what is to be expected to be present in Forest Park, at least in the Spring migration.

April 11, 1934

FIELD OBSERVATIONS

(continued from page 1)

shoe Lake. The thrilling particulars, as described by Miss Ernst will be found elsewhere in this issue.

Generally mild weather prevailed in March, with some very cold snaps. Trees began budding early in the month.

The number of field trips during the month is encouraging, the records of which follow:

March 4--Dresser's Island; Canvasback, Ring-necked Duck, Lesser Scaup, American Golden-eye, Mallard and Pintail. March 8, also at this island: Canvasback, Old Squaw, Eastern Goshawk, Bald and Golden Eagles.--Miss Ernst.

March 10--Creve Coeur Lake: Mallard, Pintail, Canvasback, Lesser Scaup, Bufflehead, and Ruddy Duck; American Merganser, Turkey Vulture, Bald Eagle, Marsh Hawk, Woodcock, Rusty Blackbird, Northern Barred Owl, Purple Martin, Brown Creeper, Evening Grosbeak, (a pair of these beautiful notables); Chipping Sparrow.--Foster and Zahm.

March 12--Horseshoe Lake: Pipit by Miss Ernst.

March 13--St. Louis County: Phoebe, Vesper Sparrow, Chipping Sparrow, Wood Duck.--Tom Kirksey.

March 17--Dresser's Island: Great Blue Heron, Red-legged (?) Black Duck, Redhead, American Golden-eye, Ruddy Duck, American Merganser, Turkey Vulture, Goshawk, Golden Eagle, Bald Eagle, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Ring-necked Pheasant, Pileated Woodpecker, Phoebe, Tree Swallow, Mockingbird, Northern and Migrant Shrikes.--Foster and Zahm.

March 20--Wydown and Big Bend: Cedar Waxwing, flock of about 30--Barger and Kirksey.

March 24-25--The Webster Groves' Nature Society sponsored trips on both days to the "Bird Mecca," Dresser's Island. Many of the St. Louis Bird Club members went too, especially on the 25th. The early visitors on Saturday saw a total of 54, including: Loon, Blue-winged Teal, Canvasback, American Merganser, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Cooper's Hawk, Both Eagles, Pileated Woodpecker, both Horned Larks,

Page 71

both Chickadees, Cedar Waxwing, Towhee, White-crowned and White-throated Sparrows, etc.

Miss Ernst, Foster and Zahm visited the island later in the day. Their list added Gadwall, Pied-billed Grebe, Golden Plover and Coot.

On both days many species were seen en route. On Sunday at Marais Temps Claire, an extensive marsh above St. Charles, on the way to Dresser's Island, the White-fronted Goose, Great Blue Heron, Green-winged Teal, Black Duck and Blue Grosbeak were observed by Miss Ernst, Foster, Zahm and the writer.

Other records were: Pied-billed Grebe, Shoveller, Redhead, Ring-necked Duck, Canvasback, Red-shouldered and Broad-winged Hawks both Eagles, Greater Yellowlegs, Herring and Ring-billed Gulls, Pileated Woodpecker, Barred Owl, Phoebe, Purple Martin, Goldfinch, both Horned Larks, White-breasted Nuthatch, both Meadowlarks and Coot.

March 27--Horseshoe Lake: Canvasback, Ring-necked Duck, Lesser Scaup, American Merganser, Coot, Shoveller, Lesser Yellowlegs, Pectoral Sandpiper, and Rusty Blackbird.--Tom Kirksey.

March 28--Horseshoe Lake: Baldpate.--Miss Ernst.

In Forest Park for the month of March, N. R. Barger reports Towhee, 6th; Brown Thrasher, 9th; Red-winged Blackbirds, 11th; Fox Sparrow, 15th; Rustys, 17th; Field Sparrow, 17th; Bewick Wren, 21st; Phoebe, 21st.

On March 31st, the first club-walk of the season, the following of note were seen: Canada Goose, Wood Duck (20), Black Duck, Ring-necked Duck, Lesser Scaup, Northern Horned Lark, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Winter Wren, Purple Martin, Hermit Thrush, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Brown Thrasher, Purple Finch. The ducks mentioned are believed to be wild and not of the zoological collection. During the month Mallard, Shoveller and Redheaded Ducks were also seen in the park lagoons.

April 11, 1934

STEELVILLE, MISSOURI
Observations and Bird-banding.

February 25th, after three days of snow and zero weather, the following birds fed at my banding station: Blue Jays, Cardinals, Juncos, Goldfinches, Song Sparrows, Tree Sparrows, White-throated Sparrows, Mockingbirds, Titmice, Chickadees, Downy Woodpeckers, Carolina Wrens, and Robins. The first Robin was seen Feb. 21.

The six Huthatches which had been feeding from the traps and suet basket all winter failed to appear from Friday, Feb. 23, when the big snow fell until Tues. Feb. 27, after the snow was almost gone. Then they came repeating in the traps from one to three times a day, never intelligent enough to get out the same way they got in. Where were they while the snow was on? After four months of repeating they are getting smart enough to go readily enough into the gathering cage from the ground trap.

But the Song Sparrows visiting the trap for the first time darted back out of the Higgins ground trap at the first approach of anyone. The trap was turned facing the door, hoping that the birds would become confused, if habits had been formed for the far entrance, but each bird on entering for the first time, the trap in its new position, without a seconds hesitation darted back out. A few were caught by springing sudden and startling surprises on them.

Returns for this time were: Juncos, three, banded Dec. 1932; Feb. 7 and 8, 1933; Chickadees, two, banded April 1933; and Titmouse, one, banded Dec. 1932.

March 18, another snow covered a thick crust of ice. It was a queer combination of summer and winter birds which fed all day Sunday at the traps. A flock of Goldfinches fed on seeds from pods of *Bignonia radicans* which hung by the window. Other birds feeding within three feet of the house were: Blue Jays, Cardinals, Juncos, Song Sparrow, Tree Spar-

Page 72

rows, Chipping Sparrows, White-throated Sparrows, Bronzed Grackles, Mockingbirds, Titmice, Chickadees, Flicker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpeckers, Nuthatches, Carolina Wrens, Bewicks Wren, Robins and Bluebirds. Killdeer were heard along the creek.

--Cora E. Shoop.
Have Nuthatches been known to den up during extreme weather?

EXCHANGES

WEBSTER GROVES NATURE NOTES. -- Contains a page of specifications for bird houses for all species known to build in houses. It also announces an all-day bird-census to be taken at Rankin, Apr. 8th.

IOWA BIRD LIFE.--Quarterly publication of the Iowa Ornithologists' Union begins with an article on the Bald Eagle. It states that while this Eagle formerly was quite common there and bred regularly it is doubtful whether the latter is the case now.

Another writer points out destruction of birds by cars. In the section of general notes there is a record of the Magpie being found in Plymouth County Iowa in January of this year.

BIRD-LORE.--Among the Notes from Field and Study is a record of a Flicker nesting on the ground. The eggs (three) were laid in a slight cavity.

Dr. Allen treats the story of the Red-wing in this issue with his usual extraordinary photographs.

A cartoon depicting the deplorable wild-life situation, by J. N. Darling is included under the article about Wild-Life Restoration. It is hoped that \$25,000,000 will be granted by the President to purchase farmland of low agricultural value.

There are now about 13,800,000 acres of sanctuary administered by Federal agencies; about 28,500,000 acres by state administration; and still more (number unknown) which are either under municipal or private ownership and administration.

April 11, 1934

New Species Found

(continued from first page)

seeing. On March 22, in the late afternoon, one was taken, as a group of three dropped into the lake. Miss Ernst was called to come and see the specimen, which proved on reference to the European manuals, especially Thorburn's "British Birds", to be the Ruddy Sheldrake. The specimen taken is a female as indicated by the lack of the dark neck ring which was prominent on two of the three birds originally seen on March 12. For a number of days none were noted in this thinly populated region, although records of their having been seen may possibly be made by later check-up. On March 30 a pair was taken from the same general location. Between March 12 and April 1, very many people entirely familiar with the lowlands in this part of Illinois have been approached and there is no record in the memory of the oldest hunters of the bird having been seen there. Whether these birds are the progeny of escapes or whether they have come from the Eurasian continent across to America needs to be determined by later inquiry. Bent includes the Ruddy Sheldrake in his Life Histories on the strength of stragglers in Greenland. The latest A. O. U. check list and Chapman's Manual include it on the strength of a record in North Carolina and a record in New Jersey. A summary of the printed records is given as follows:

Casarea Ferrunginea (Pallas)

RUDDY SHELDRAKE

Nesting -- Yarrell (1871) says of its breeding habits:

The ruddy sheldrake makes its nest in a hole; sometimes in the middle of a cornfield or in a mar-mot's burrow on the plains; at others in clufts of precipitous rocks, as in Algeria and in Palestine, where Canon Tristram, found nests amongst those of giffon vultures, etc. In southern Russia hollow trees are said to be selected, the male bird keeping watch on a branch while the female is

Page 73

sitting; felled hollow logs and deserted nests of birds of prey are also utilized; and, according to Colonel Prjevalsky, the female sometimes lays her eggs in the fireplaces of villages abandoned by the Mongols, becoming almost black with soot while sitting.

Food -- Morris (1903) says of the food of this species:

They feed early in the morning, and again toward nightfall, in corn and stubble fields, resorting thither from the marshes, which they otherwise inhabit. Their food, water plants, water insects and their larvae, worms, and the roe and young fry of fish.

Behavior -- Referring to its habits he writes:

These birds assemble in flocks except when paired in the summer. They seem not to associate with other species. They are difficult to be tamed, but have been kept for ornament, and have even been known to breed in confinement, on being provided with burrows in the earth for the purpose. The male and female seem much attached to each other. They are very shy and restless birds.

Yarrell (1871) says:

The call note, when uttered on the wing, is described by Pallas as resembling a clarionetlike a-oung, whence the name of Aangir given to the bird by the Mongols, who hold it sacred; and Ahngoot, by the natives of the vicinity of Lake Van, in Armenia. According to a Hindoo legend, as given by Jerdon, the birds represent two lovers talking to each other across a stream at night - "Chakwa, shall I come? No, Chakwi. Chakwi, shall I come? No, Chakwa." In confinement the note is a sort of kape or ka, several times repeated. In its manner of walking this species resembles a goose, and it feeds in a similar manner, grazing in the fields of young corn and picking up seeds of grass, grain, etc. In summer the birds go in pairs, but at other times

April 11, 1934

they are gregarious, and Jerdon says that on the Chilka Lake he has seen thousands in one flock in April.

Distribution

Breeding range--Mainly in south-eastern Europe and Central Asia East to Manchuria and China. South to the plateau of Tibet, Persia, and rarely to Algeria and northern Morocco. West rarely to southern Spain; more regularly to the Adriatic Sea. North to Roumania, Bulgaria, Macedonia, southern Russia and Siberia, Lake Baikal, and Mongolia.

Winter range -- Resident over much of its breeding range. East in winter to Japan. South to Formosa, Ceylon, India, southern Arabia, Egypt, Abyssinia, Sahara, Algeria and Morocco.

Casual records--Wanders to Scandinavia, Great Britain, Iceland, and Greenland.

Egg dates -- Southern Russia: Eight records, May 7 to June 1. --Miss L. R. Ernst.

TRUMPETER SWAN NOT EXTERMINATED

Bird - Lore states that fifteen years ago no Trumpeter Swans were believed to be nesting in the United States. A few in northwestern Canada were thought to be the last remnant of the Species. However today they are again on the increase in Yellowstone Park, where they are rigidly protected. About 50 of them were observed in this park during January of this year.

Baron von Berlepsch

Bird-Lore also recounts the very successful methods of bird-attraction to homes by this member of The International Committee for Bird Protection, who died last year. He was so successful attracting birds around his estate in Germany that the Association has distributed several hundred of the English translation of his book on the subject.

PERSONALIA

N. R. Barger, while visiting at Madison, Easter, found the Prairie Hen common in that vicinity.

Page 74

PROJECT OF THE MONTH--MIGRATION

At the time of distribution of this paper the Spring migration will be about to get into its fullest swing. The middle of this month will see the House Wren, the Marsh Wren, the Red-breasted Nuthatch, the Wood Thrush, the Catbird, the Redstart, the Hooded Warbler, the Yellowthroat, the Louisiana Water-thrust, the Ovenbird, the Prairie Warbler, the Palm Warbler, the Sycamore Warbler, the Parula Warbler, the Black and White Warbler, the Yellow-throated Vireo, the Warbling Vireo, the Indigo Bunting, the Chimney Swift, the Whip-poor-will, the Spotted Sandpiper, the Solitary Sandpiper, the Least Sandpiper, the Black-crowned Night Heron, the Green Heron, the Least Bittern, and others due to come into St. Louis territory. We should not overlook, however, the fact that the Spring migration is not over the first of May, but there are still migrants to be noted here for the first time even through the month of May.

LONG-EARED OWL IN FOREST PARK

Selle, a student at Concordia Seminary reports a single individual of this species in the Southwest corner of Forest Park, February 8th of this year.

BOOK NEWS

Fifty Years' Progress of American Ornithology, 1883-1933. Published by the American Ornithologists' Union on the occasion of its Semi-Centennial Anniversary, New York City, Nov. 13-16, 1933. Lancaster, Pa., 1933. 8vo. 249 pages; 1 plate. Price \$1. Postage 10¢.

Nature Chats. A Year Out - of Doors. By John Harvey Furbay, Ph.D. Illustrations by William D. Venard. Science Press Printing Co., Lancaster, Pa., 1933. 12mo. xvi 255 pages.

In The Season of the Year. A record of country life throughout the months by James J. Cash. Herbert Jenkins, Ltd., 3 York St., St. James', London S. W. 1.